



Ontario Farmland Trust  
c/o University of Guelph  
50 Stone Rd E  
Guelph ON N1G 2W1

November 1, 2023

The Honourable Graydon Smith  
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry  
99 Wellesley Street West  
Room 6630, Whitney Block  
Toronto ON M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Smith,

**Subject:** Response to Proposed Act regarding the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT) in response to your letter dated October 16, 2023, concerning the proposed legislation for the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve (DRAP).

We are pleased to hear of the Ontario government's initiative to introduce legislation that will continue the protections of the DRAP easements and covenants. OFT fully supports this effort and applauds the government's commitment to preserving these vital landscapes for agricultural uses.

Easements have been a cornerstone of our work at OFT. We routinely employ them as a tool to forge new partnerships with private landowners and to safeguard significant landscapes for the long term. The integrity of these tools is paramount to our mission and the broader goal of conserving Ontario's valuable agricultural and natural landscapes.

OFT also supports the proposed legislation to reintegrate the DRAP lands into the Greenbelt. This move not only reinforces the importance of these lands but also aligns with broader efforts to maintain and enhance the ecological and agricultural significance of the Greenbelt, while maintaining contiguous agricultural land that supports a thriving rural and agri-food economy.

### **Proposal for Upholding DRAP Easement Integrity**

As part of the ongoing commitment to safeguard the DRAP lands and uphold the integrity of the subject farmland conservation easements, OFT is proposing that our organization be instated as the holder of



the DRAP conservation easement agreements. With nearly two decades of experience in farmland conservation easement agreements and a deep-rooted mission to protect and preserve Ontario's farmland, OFT is uniquely positioned to ensure the long-term protection and monitoring of these agreements. By deepening our collaboration, the government and OFT can jointly advance our shared objectives. Such a partnership would have positive results over issues that the public cares deeply about, underscoring the proactive steps taken by the administration.

In conclusion, we express our gratitude for the opportunity to provide feedback on this vital proposal. We believe that with collaborative efforts, we can ensure the protection of our province's cherished agricultural landscapes for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Martin Straathof  
Executive Director  
Ontario Farmland Trust

Margaret Walton  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Ontario Farmland Trust

Cc: Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs  
Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Ric Bresee, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry  
Trevor Jones, Parliamentary Assistant to Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs  
Matthew Rae, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing